

WYCOMBE Wanderers will be hoping for a close result when they meet Monza in Italy tonight in the first leg of the Anglo-Italian Non-League Trophy.

The away side pay all their own expenses and Wycombe treasurer Roger Lee says his club will need a gate of between 3,000 and 4,000 for the return leg on October 8 to break even.

Said Lee: "We normally average about 2,000 so if we do well tonight, we should get possibly twice our usual crowd at Wycombe."

"But if we lose heavily, much of the interest will go out of the second game."

"Monza are considered about as good as most Football League Third Division teams so it's fairly obvious we shall have to play well to hold them."

GREAT HONOUR

Lee points out that when Wycombe, Rothmans Isthmian League champions for the last two years, first agreed to represent Britain's Non-League clubs in this competition, he was worried about the cost of transporting 15 players and four officials to Italy.

Now he says: "I'm pleased we accepted the invitation because it is a great honour and I'm optimistic enough to think we might not be hit too hard financially."

STAINES, who won the Isthmian League Second Division last season, also play in Italy this Saturday when they meet Banco Roma in the first leg of the Barassi Cup.

This used to be contested by the Amateur Cup winners of both countries.

Saturday's game will be in the Olympic Stadium in Rome as a curtain-raiser to the Italy-England European Nations tie. The return leg at Staines is on October 7.

1991

WYCOMBE Wanderers fly out to Milan tonight (Tuesday) from Heathrow Airport with a party of 19 for their first-ever match in Europe. They meet A.C. Monza in the first leg of the European Trophy.

To cut down on costs, the party has been limited with only four officials making the trip. The Blues have taken 15 players because under European rules they are entitled to use two of five substitutes for the match. The players who miss the trip are Derek Cotterell, Paul Sussons and Paul Fuschillo. Manager Brian Lee, his assistant John Reardon, secretary Tony Mahoney and treasurer Roger Lee are the officials going.

The party leave Wycombe at 3 p.m. for their 4.30 flight and will be staying the night in an hotel just outside Milan. On Wednesday, the players will train at a nearby sports centre and will later be guests at a reception given by the town mayor.

The match kicks off in the evening at 8.30 p.m. and club pennants will be exchanged. The party returns after a day's sight seeing, on Thursday evening.

Although it is difficult to judge the standard of Monza, as semi-professionals, they seem certain to be a strong side. They had a highly successful season last year, finishing runners-up in Division 3 of the Italian League and winning the League Cup (for Division 3 and 4 clubs) for the second year running.

In the Italian League, the first two divisions are full professionals while Division 3 and 4 are semi-pros. Only the winners are promoted from Division 3 — and then only if they wish to turn professional. Average gates at Monza are 5,000 and the ground holds 12,000. Monza expect a gate in excess of 8,000 for the visit of Wycombe.

The club, founded in 1912, has produced internationals in the past and have also supplied the leading Italian clubs with players. Only last season, one Monza star, Antonili, was sold to A.C. Milan for the astonishing figure of £250,000. With transfers like this, the smaller clubs' coffers must be full to the brim and it makes Wanderers' £12,000 profit over last season look a little paltry.

The winners of this revitalised European Trophy, one of three Anglo-Italian competitions which have been re-introduced this season — will receive a magnificent trophy valued at nearly £3,000. Both teams will receive medals. The return leg is at Loakes Park on October 8 and already 79 Monza supporters have made provisional bookings for stand tickets.